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AUTHOR Murray, David R.
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ABSTRACT

Developed from 63 responses to a survey of 104 members of the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology (KACT), this report provides information on the association's members in three categories: (1) basic demographic data, employment function, academic preparation, and areas of expertise and interest; (2) other affiliations, committee interests, and future organizational interests; and (3) issues of individual concern. The data are presented in 10 tables, and a concluding summary relates these findings to the future development of KACT. (RP)

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A Profile of the Kentucky Technologist

by David R. Murray

ABSTRACT:

This article was developed from the membership's responses to a survey conducted during a recent membership campaign. Generally, the survey identified the membership of the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology (KACT). The survey also identified the membership's level of academic preparation, their job function, areas of interest and expertise, and their future interests and commitments towards the Association and the profession in general. The results of the study provide a unique profile of the Kentucky Technologist as identified by the respondents. It is the intent of the author that the results of the study be used as a tool by KACT for long range planning. Hopefully, from this planning, greater professional opportunities for instructional technologists will emerge.

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A Profile of the Kentucky Technologist

With the rapid proliferation of new technologies throughout the various teaching and training environments, new and exciting professional opportunities are emerging. For example, during the past five years, there has been a tremendous growth in the field of human resource development. This growth has primarily been part of an overall effort to improve productivity in the work place. As part of this effort, new goals and objectives which include the promotion of the effective uses of educational technology have been developed.

Technological innovations introduced just recently have expanded the capabilities of our field. To better serve our clientele, the microcomputer, the interactive videodisk, interactive computer generated graphic systems, and teleconferencing have been introduced as new tools in our environments. With the trends in employment and the recent introduction of the new technologies, there is a natural tendency for professionals to gather together to work on mutual problems, discuss issues which need to be examined, consider some solutions, review relationships and set standards for the profession. Professional societies and state and national organizations have provided opportunities for these types of experiences.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has provided several opportunities over the years for those interested in media and technology. For over fifty years a media and technology organization has existed in the state and has evolved into what we now know as the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology (KACT). KACT is the state affiliate of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). The general purpose of the organization as indicated in Article II of the Constitution, "shall be to encourage effective use of technology in communications, education and training at all levels." Furthermore, "the Association shall serve as a forum for all those involved in the planning, production, utilization and evaluation of communication systems."

In order for the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology to fulfill its defined purpose and more readily be of service to the profession, the Commonwealth, and the various institutions and

organizations in which we are employed, it is important to develop a basic understanding of our membership.

Lewis Carroll summed up the whole process in his book Alice in Wonderland when he portrayed Alice trying to return home. In this dialogue, she asks, "Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?" The Queen, in all of her wisdom replied, "that depends a good deal on where you want to get to!" Although long range planning requires a great deal more information than this survey report will provide, it is a beginning. Results will come when the organization determines where they want to "get to. "

The Survey:

In accordance with the predefined goals of the research committee, a membership survey was developed. Generally, the questionnaire was designed in order to identify basic demographic characteristics of our membership, identify the various settings in which they serve, and to determine the future interest of the membership. It was understood that the data compiled would be used for long range planning considerations by the Board of Directors and to develop a system of mutual assistance networking. Part of the results of the questionnaire were used to compile The Human Resource Directory which was published by KACT earlier this year.

The survey technique was selected because it is the most widely used procedure for obtaining specific data from a population located over a large geographic area. In order to save time and money, a copy of the questionnaire was included with membership renewal announcements.

From approximately 104 members, 63 elected to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of Part I: (Basic Demographic Data, Employment Function, Academic Preparation, and Areas of Expertise and Interest); Part II: (Other Affiliations, Committee Interests and Future Organizational Interests); and Part III: (Free Response). The free response section was provided to allow the membership to respond in a narrative manner concerning issues that they were individually concerned with.

Objectives of the Study

To define a sense of direction to the survey, project objectives were established. These objectives were outgrowths of general goals defined by the research committee. They were as follows:

To identify the chronological age of the membership and what age group they represented.

To determine the broad range of occupational classifications and other related data.

To determine the level of academic preparation of the membership.

To identify what academic level or in what setting the membership provides services.

To determine primary and secondary areas of professional preparation.

To determine what specific areas of expertise and/or interests members are willing to share with fellow members.

To identify the number of years the membership has spent in their professional field and/or related fields.

To identify the level of interest in committee work and involvement in the organization now and in the future.

To identify what other professional associations and specialized interest groups the membership belongs to.

Limitations:

The study was limited to those members who were willing to complete and return the questionnaire. The survey was also limited to addressing the predefined objectives of the study and any information provided through the free response section of the questionnaire.

Part I
Membership Demographic Data

The membership of the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology reflected a broad range of professionals in the areas of communications, library/media services, and instructional technology. From the 63 members who elected to complete the questionnaire, 25 were male and 38 were female in gender. The ages of the target population ranged from 21 to over 60.

TABLE 1
AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Age Group	No. of Members	% of Total
21 - 25	2	3.17
26 - 30	2	3.17
36 - 40	16	25.40
41 - 45	7	11.11
46 - 50	3	4.76
51 - 55	10	15.87
56 - 60	3	4.76
Over 60	6	9.52
No Answer	1	1.59

Median Age Range: 36-40 Mode Age Range: 36-40

Given the median and mode age range of 36-40, it would appear that the greater membership is well established in the main stream of society.

Professional Preparation:

The survey indicates that approximately 90% of the membership hold a graduate degree. Over 27% have considerable advanced graduate studies. This would include specialist certificates and doctoral degree levels of preparation or members who hold an additional masters in another field.

TABLE 2
PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

Degree	No. of Members	% of Total
BA/BS	3	4.76
MA/MS	21	33.33
MLS	17	26.98
MFA	1	1.59
Advanced Certificate	5	7.94
Ed.D./Ph.D.	12	19.05
Other	4	6.35
Total Master Degrees	39	61.90
Total Graduate Degrees	56	88.89

Primary Fields of Preparation:

The respondents to the survey were academically prepared in a variety of disciplines. Approximately 62% received academic preparation in the areas of school library/media or educational media and technology. The remainder were trained in other related areas such as general education, communications or the liberal arts and sciences. Another 3% had undergone engineering training.

TABLE 3
PRIMARY FIELD OF PREPARATION

Field	No. of Members	% of Total
Library Science	24	38.10
Educational Media	15	23.81
Communications	6	9.52
General Education	6	9.52
Humanities	5	7.94
Curriculum Development	3	4.76
Engineering	2	3.17
Other	2	3.17

Secondary Fields of Preparation:

A large number of the participants, approximately 46%, minored in general education or the humanities. Other members secondary field of preparation were in areas which ranged from applied sciences to mathematics. Another 27% of the respondents did not respond to this question on the questionnaire.

TABLE 4
SECONDARY FIELD OF PREPARATION

Field	No. of Members	% of Total
Humanities	18	28.57
General Education	11	17.46
Applied Sciences	5	7.94
Library Science	4	6.35
Communications	2	3.17
Math/Computer Science	2	3.17
Instructional Design	2	3.17
Other	2	3.17
No Answer	17	26.98

Position or Employment Function:

Approximately 75% of the respondents to the survey assume responsibility for the administration and supervision of a school library/media center or an educational media and instructional support services. The remainder of the membership provide teaching and training functions. Media production and research were also mentioned.

TABLE 5
EMPLOYMENT FUNCTION

Job Function	No. of Members	% of Total
Librarian	29	46.03
Administration	18	28.57
Training	5	7.94
Teaching	2	3.17
Media Production	1	1.59
Communications	1	1.59
Engineering	1	1.59
Research	1	1.59
Retired	1	1.59
Other	4	6.35

Area of Employment:

The largest majority of the respondents (43%) were employed at institutions of higher education. Another 40% of the members were employed at elementary or secondary schools. The remaining respondents were either employed in business or industrial settings or in government or state agencies.

TABLE 6
AREA OR LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

Area	No. of Members	% of Total
Higher Education	27	42.85
Elementary School Level	16	25.40
Secondary School Level	9	14.29
Business/Industrial	6	9.52
Government (State Agency)	3	4.76
Retired	1	3.17

Professional Experience:

Approximately one third of the membership who responded to the survey, had served in the profession for 6 to 10 years. The same percentage had served for 11 to 15 years.

TABLE 7
YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

No. of Years	No. of Members	% of Total
1-5	6	9.52
6-10	18	28.57
11-15	18	28.57
16-20	7	11.11
21-25	7	11.11
Over 25	7	11.11

In addition, many of the membership also served in related areas such as classroom teaching. However, a majority of the respondents (52%) either elected not to answer this question or indicated that they did not have related experience.

TABLE 8
YEARS OF RELATED EXPERIENCE

No. of Years	No. of Members	% of Total
1-5	10	15.87
6-10	9	14.29
11-15	4	6.35
16-20	3	4.76
21-25	1	1.59
Over 25	3	4.76
No Answer or None	33	52.38

Part II
Areas of Interest and Service

This section primarily dealt with the level of involvement the present membership had to the organization and the amount of involvement they would like to provide in the future. Respondents were asked to indicate their current involvement with KACT committees and the type of involvement they would like to have with the organization in the future. They were also asked to indicate other associations they were affiliated with.

Only 38% of the respondents to the survey elected to answer the section of the questionnaire related to their interest and present involvement in the committees supported by KACT. The remainder, 62%, either were not presently serving on a committee or did not know what activities the committees were engaged in.

The most popular activities were identified to be serving on a committee involved in conference planning and working on developing state wide publications. Involvement in research and organizational leadership appeared to be the next most popular areas of interest. The least popular committees were the membership and the nominations committees. Over 90% of the members who did answer this section of the questionnaire, indicated that new committees were needed.

TABLE 9
PRESENT INVOLVEMENT WITH KACT COMMITTEES

Committee	No. of Members	% of Total
Conference Planning	8	12.70
Publications	8	12.70
Leadership	6	9.52
Research	6	9.52
Membership	4	6.35
Nomination	3	4.76
Other	4	6.35
No Answer	39	61.90

*some members served on more than one committee

When the respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in terms of future involvement, the majority 71.43%, provided a response. Again, the most popular areas were in committee membership and publications. Several members (approximately 22%) however, indicated that they preferred to be an interested observer rather than actively involved. The same percentage indicated that they would participate as an occasional volunteer.

TABLE 10
LEVEL OF INTEREST FOR FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

Interest	No. of Members	% of Total
Committee Membership	16	25.40
Publications	16	25.40
Occasional Volunteer	15	23.81
Interested Observer	15	23.81
Leadership	4	6.35
Retired	3	4.76
Social Affiliation	2	3.17
Not Sure	3	4.76
No Answer	21	28.75

*some respondents answered more than one question

Specialized Interest Groups:

The greater majority of the respondents to the survey indicated that they held memberships in other related professional associations. KACT's national affiliate, The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) was the most commonly mentioned. Also mentioned were the American Library Association (ALA), The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Phi Delta Kappa and the National Society for Performance and Instruction (NSPI). These organization's state affiliates were also cited. These listings suggest that KACT members join these other organizations for more specialized support, ie., librarians belong to ALA and trainers belong to ASTD. Many view KACT as a blanket organization which provides an overview of a wide array of instructional support technologies.

Free Response:

A free response section was provided as part of the questionnaire. The objective of this section was to gather any additional information which the respondents felt they could provide. A great deal of positive feedback was received, particularly from the older members.

Several respondents indicated that they enjoyed the workshops which were provided during state conferences. Many also indicated that they would volunteer to provide sessions on such topics as instructional design concepts, teleconferencing and stress management. Adult and continuing education also appeared to be a topic of interest. Several other members gave specific information on the type of contributions that they felt they could make to the state wide publications.

Finally, one member summed it all up when she stated, "I am fond of KACT and I use KACT to help me do my job better." This statement generally reflected what many of the members felt.

Summary

If one reviews the data presented in this paper objectively, a great many factors can be identified. These factors, although subtle, sometimes can be used to build a strong and brighter future for the Association. First, almost all of the membership had obtained graduate degrees. In addition, many have extended their preparation to include advanced graduate work. It is also obvious that many years of experience in the field of educational communications and technology are reflected within the survey responses. Collectively, these two factors suggest that the Association has a vast pool of professional human resources that could be tapped to address some of the problems facing KACT and the profession both now and in the future.

In terms of future involvement, two areas stand out. These areas are conference planning and publications. Both conferences and publications are viewed as vehicles which perpetuate professional development. It is obvious that the membership views the role of KACT to maintain and promote professional development in the profession. It is also obvious that the membership is willing to become involved in the planning of these efforts. They are also willing to commit themselves to review concepts and methods, research areas of interest and to share their ideas in print through the state wide publications. What is not so obvious in the fact that many have ben left out of these activities in the past. There is a need to mobilize the states untapped human resources

and get them actively contributing to the Association. This project should be considered Phase I of a four part membership activation plan. Phase II, the compiling of a human resource directory has been completed and distributed to the membership. Phase III would be for the Board of Directors to review the talents of the membership as reflected through this study, the Directory and interviews, and establish committees and various task forces based on their findings. The final phase would be to present the fruits of these committees in the form of conferences and publications. Establishing a state wide learning resource collection also can prove to be a valuable resource for the practicing professional. One has been established and is presently housed at Western Kentucky University. Various committees may elect to mediate their findings and contribute the materials to the collection. One variable is extremely important. The labor must be distributed among the groups and individuals. No single person can do all the work alone. If the organization is going to continue to succeed, it must be a team effort.

Finally, I believe there are three basic elements to every successful professional organization. They are scholarship, leadership and service. Every organization must be fully aware of the literature and related research which provides a foundation for their profession. Furthermore, they must be willing to contribute to the literature. This constitutes a scholarly pursuit. Once scholarship is established, the professionals in the field must implement this body of knowledge and provide this expertise at all levels in all areas. This would include our work settings, in other organizations, the state legislature, state departments of education and throughout the business and industrial community. We must provide leadership in all areas. Finally, we must share our time, efforts, and talents to our profession. If we do not provide this level of service, instructional technology will cease to exist as a discipline. Ultimately, if we as professionals work for the profession of instructional technology, the profession will work for us and the people we serve.

Dr. David R. Murray is past president of the Kentucky Association for Communications and Technology. He presently serves as a member of the Faculty of Education for Siena College, Loudonville, New York.